

Fund National Advisory Commission on Child Care and Early Education. In addition, Ms. Vinci has served as a commissioner on the National Head Start Fellowship Commission since its inception.

Ms. Vinci's commitment to children and those who care for them is an inspiration to all who have known and worked with her. Her contributions have made a difference in the lives of many and have built a pathway for generations to come. On behalf of America's children and advocates for children, I thank her for her great work and wish her a rewarding retirement.●

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2003

● Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. In the last Congress Senator KENNEDY and I introduced the Local Law Enforcement Act, a bill that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

I would like to describe a terrible crime that occurred on September 21, 2001. In Holden, MA, a 20-year-old man stopped at a traffic light assaulted another driver because he thought he was of Middle Eastern descent. The assailant got out of his car, pulled the driver out of his van, and proceeded to attack the victim. The assailant punched and yelled at the victim, striking him several times before the van driver attempted to fight back.

I believe that Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.●

BRAD BEAN

● Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, today I recognize and honor a special friend, Mr. Brad Bean. Brad has been involved in the development and planning of the Burns' Telecommunications Center since its inception and has been dedicated to the continued expansion and advancement of the Burns' Center. Brad played an integral role in capturing my vision of using technology to connect all sectors of our rural State to the "new world" of electronic transmission and communication which has developed since the late 1980s. My goal to develop a technology training center dedicated to distance learning, telemedicine, classrooms, students and teachers and the business community has been advanced by Brad's belief in that vision.

His proven leadership has drawn individuals and companies from around the world to invest in the Burns' Telecommunications Center. Brad and his

wife, Jacqueline, have helped to promote the opportunities available at the Burns' Center to people from many places in Montana and beyond its borders. Brad has served on the Burns' Telecommunications National Advisory Board and is retiring this year to my regret. I personally thank Brad and acknowledge and praise his passion for excellence, program development and his loyalty to my mission for the Burns' Center. Brad has gone above and beyond the call of duty and I salute him for his generous support and help.

We are fortunate in Montana to have people like Brad and Jacqueline, who are willing to give of themselves to help their community and their State.●

TRIBUTE TO A PATRIOT, HARLAN MEREDITH

● Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of Mr. Harlan Meredith, a resident of Tuscaloosa, a Navy hero, and a leader in our community. Over the Independence Day holiday, a friend of mine, Charlie Land, read the following tribute about Mr. Meredith. I ask that Charlie's comments be printed in the RECORD in celebration of Harlan Meredith.

The material follows:

Once upon a time a young man of this church, freshly graduated from the University of Alabama, faced the world and pondered the future. I know that doesn't sound like a big deal. New college graduates are always doing that. No doubt some are right now.

But this was a special time. It was May of 1941. He was 20 years old and war loomed uncertainly on the horizon.

He already had tried to get into military service through the University's advanced Army or Army Air Corps ROTC programs. Both had turned him down. Something always seemed to be wrong when he took the required physical examinations, although nothing ever showed up in his regular physicals. "I guess the Lord was just looking after me," he would muse many years later. "I figure He just didn't want me to be in those."

Within a few months, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. War wasn't just on the horizon anymore.

He really had always wanted to serve in the U.S. Navy, anyhow. He applied for a direct commission as a naval officer and was accepted. He was ready to go fight for his country, for freedom.

But the Navy sent its new ensign to Chicago to oversee the hydrographic office that served the Great Lakes. It was not an unimportant job and he did it well. His commanding officer in Detroit was pleased. He pronounced his ensign a lucky young man; he could hydrograph his way through the whole war right there in Chicago. He liked Chicago okay, but that wasn't at all where he wanted to be or what he wanted to do. He wanted to go to sea and fight. It took a while, and he had to find his own replacement, but finally he was off to San Francisco to train for sea duty.

Now he was 21, but he was still single, his wife-to-be yet unmet. And he was all steamed up to go to the South Pacific.

"You know how you are at that age," he says.

He got there, although in a sort of round-about way. His first sea duty was on the sea-

plane tender Hulbert, a converted destroyer, in the Aleutian Islands off Alaska. It was no pleasure cruise. The Aleutians were hostile waters; Japanese forces occupied some of the islands. There was combat, although not the heavy action to be found in the South Pacific. One night the Hulbert dragged anchor off a point in the Aleutians, ran aground and sank.

He transferred to a small new escort aircraft carrier based in Portland, OR. Typical of her class, the ship was named for a bay. Her namesake, Kalinin Bay, was in Southeast Alaska. But she would take her new gunnery officer from Tuscaloosa to the South Pacific at last.

And there would be some action.

The *Kalinin Bay*, with her 27 aircraft and 860 crew members, sailed about the South Pacific, doing her chores. A lot of them involved combat. There were enemy air attacks to fend off. There was the occasional torpedo to dodge. There were air strikes to be made. There were invasions to support—Sapan, Guam, the Southern Palaus, islands in the Leyte Gulf and finally the invasion of Leyte itself as Gen. Douglas MacArthur made good on his promise to return to the Philippines.

So the *Kalinin Bay* was no stranger to combat as she steamed some 60 miles east of the Philippine Island of Samar early on the morning of October 25, 1944. She already had operated off Leyte for more than a week. Her planes already had flown 244 sorties, destroying enemy installations and airfields on five different islands.

She was part of a small naval battle group nicknamed "Taffy 3." It included 5 other escort carriers, plus a screen of 3 destroyers and 4 destroyer escorts. The carriers of "Taffy 3" were preparing to launch their first air strikes of the day when its commanding admiral learned that a sizable Japanese naval force was approaching. It was 0647 hours.

By 0658 hours, "Taffy 3" was under fire from part of the largest Japanese surface fleet to fight since the Battle of Midway, coming to keep the Americans out of the Philippines.

The "Battle Off Samar", as it would be called, was under way. It would be described by historians as one of the most memorable engagements in U.S. naval history.

The ships of "Taffy 3", slower, outnumbered and outgunned, soon were fighting for their lives against a force of four Japanese battleships, eight cruisers and 12 destroyers. The *Kalinin Bay* took the first of 15 direct hits at 0750 hours, a 14- or 16-inch shell from one of the battleships. It struck one side of the hangar deck near the forward elevator. A later hit penetrated the deck and destroyed all of the ship's radio and radar equipment.

Fortunately, some of the shells went right through the ship without causing significant damage. And even more fortunately, there were a great many near misses. The *Kalinin Bay* fought back hard. She launched her aircraft while under fire from three cruisers. She dodged behind a timely rain squall, then maneuvered behind chemical smoke. She traded fire with the cruisers for a while, then shot it out with Japan's Destroyer Squadron 10.

Her 5-inch gun stayed busy. It scored two hits on one heavy cruiser and hit a Japanese destroyer amidships. And her planes inflicted heavy damage, striking the enemy ships with bombs, rockets and gunfire.

The Japanese naval vessels turned away for "Taffy 3" after 2½ hours, but not before their destroyers launched a torpedo attack. The torpedoes were launched from far enough away to begin to slow before reaching their targets. So a U.S. Avenger torpedo-